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STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES, ON THE QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

NEW YORK, 12 AUGUST 1988

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation should like to begin by reiterating its principled objection to the consideration of the so-called question of East Timor by this or any other forum. Likewise, we are also opposed to the granting of hearings to so-called petitioners, who have misused and abused the privilege to appear before this Committee for the purpose of gaining publicity and recognition for themselves and for certain obscure "organizations" and groups, many of which are essentially unknown and unrecognized beyond the confines of these hearings. It is indeed astounding how, by proclaiming themselves "experts" on the question under consideration or by simply printing a letterhead with a revolutionary or humanitarian sounding label, seemingly anyone can be virtually guaranteed access to address this important body. If the Committee habitually agrees to listen to every person who takes the trouble to address to it a one sentence demand to be heard as a petitioner, then the prospect for conducting serious and objective hearings, for the purpose of ascertaining the facts and the objective realities, cannot but be seriously undermined.

Regrettably, as the record of previous sessions shows, this is exactly what has happened in the past and quite predictably during today's hearings as well. For rather than engage in an earnest review of the prevailing realities in East Timor and the actual historical circumstances surrounding the decolonization of the Territory, based on readily available and verifiable information, the petitioners on the contrary have again demonstrated their utter contempt for the truth by knowingly omitting information from reputable sources because it does not square with their political motivations and ideological predelictions.

My Delegation has time and again exposed these frantic efforts to paint the most horrifying picture of conditions in East Timor for what they really are : a

systematic campaign to malign Indonesia and a desperate attempt to keep alive a non-issue built around a non-existent cause.

Mr. Chairman,

Since today's meeting has essentially consisted of nothing more than a re-hash of the same well-worn ludicrous claims, half-truths and outright lies on the situation in East Timor, which we have already refuted in the past, my Delegation sees no purpose to again indulge this Committee with a point by point rebuttle.

Rather, we will again attempt to set the record straight and bring the Committee up-to-date on the actual situation in East Timor in the areas of human rights, political and economic developments, as well as religious and cultural freedoms. And as during previous sessions, we will rely on the authoritative reports of independent third parties, including foreign dignitaries and journalists who have actually been in East Timor during the past year.

Before turning to their findings, Mr. Chairman, we should like to refer to the process of decolonization in East Timor. It is to be recalled that my delegation has on previous occasions explained at length that the process of decolonization of East Timor has been completed through the implementation of the right to self-determination by the East Timorese people. And during last year's session, we distributed copies of our statement from 1986, which contained a comprehensive and factual account of that process. Predictably, none of the petitioners have seen fit to, in any substantive manner, challenge or otherwise rebut the historical record contained therein. My delegation, therefore, deems it unnecessary to take up the time of this Committee to reiterate again the evolution of the decolonization process in East Timor, and Indonesia's role in it. We would, however, like to recommend to the previous speakers, that they also read the exhaustive reports on the decolonization of East Timor as documented by Mr. Nuno Rocha, and

published in the Portuguese magazine "O Tempo", which we would be pleased to make available to interested delegations.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning now to the malicious, slanderous and indeed rediculous claims made by certain petitioners on the situation in East Timor, my Delegation feels constrained to respond to at least some of the more outrageous allegations.

First, it is truly astonishing to us that the petitioners continue to assert that the province is closed to the outside world. On this point, we can only reiterate what is already known to the international community, that the Indonesian Government is providing access to East Timor on a regular basis to foreign representatives, parliamentary missions, international agencies, journalists and others. For many years now scores of visits have been made to East Timor by senior representatives of the ICRC, UNICEF, CRS, WHO, as wll as dignitaries and journalists.

During the past year visits were made to East Timor by, inter alia, a Canadian Parliamentary Delegation headed by the Honourable Steve Paproski, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, Mr. J.L. Janssen Van Raay, member of the European Parliament, Mr. Nuno Rocha, Editor and Chief of O Tempo, a prominent weekly news magazine in Lisbon, Portugal, and a Delegation from the World Catholic University Federation (WCUF) headed by Prof. Dr. Fr. Julio T. Dutari, Vice President of the WCUF.

In this regard as well, I am pleased to inform the Committee that begining next Monday, a five-member delegation from the European Parliament will conduct a week-long visit to East Timor, in order to closely observe the current situation in the Province. We are also heartened that the invitation by the Indonesian Government to the Portuguese Parliament to send a delegation to East Timor to obtain first-hand information on conditions there has been accepted in principle and arrangements are now being made for the visit.

As to the allegation that such visits are controlled and restricted, I should like to refer to the statements of Mr. Van Raay of the European Parliament who was in East Timor during January and February last, and I quote : "During my stay in East Timor I had no security escort. I could go whereever I wanted and speak alone with whoever I wanted ..... including direct contact with authentic Timorese of the younger generation who speak Bahasa Indonesia. The helicopter fligth took me across the whole province, even to Uato Karabau where Fretilin still claims to be present and included an unscheduled stop there. I also went from Dili to Viqueque, Los Palos, Baukau and Cai-Rui, so all over the island".

Likewise, the many international agencies in East Timor are operating without any restrictions including the ICRC, CRS, UNICEF and others. These humanitarian organizations continue to function freely in the province and are working closely with the Provincial Government and the Indonesian Red Cross.

Mr. Chairman,

We were again subjected to an avalanche of wild accusations on the human rights situation in East Timor. Surely, the appropriate forum for registering such allegations is the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, where indeed these questions were taken-up during its session earlier this year. Having already responded in considerable detail to those allegations during the Commission's meeting, we see no reason to lend them further credence by doing so again. Significantly, these charges against my Government were rejected by the Commission in the past, when it decided not to continue consideration of the human rights situation in East Timor.

It is pertinent to ask therefore for what purpose do the same petitioners persist in their accusations before this Committee. The answer, of course, is self-evident : unable to sustain their anti-Indonesian campaign in any other international fora, these so-called humanitarian organizations now hope to embroil

this Committee in their detestable campaign of malice and slander against Indonesia.

An even more fundamental question is what will the people of East Timor gain from this malicious smear campaign, waged inside the Commission on Human Rights, in this Committee and elsewhere, against the dignity and integrity of Indonesia and its people ? Such manoeuvres, far from giving effect to the promotion of human rights in Indonesia, including East Timor, can only further call into question the credibility of those organizations. Moreover, their demand to be granted access to Indonesia can hardly be entertained so long as they persist in their transparent and politically motivated anti-Indonesian attacks, which they have been escalating to an incredible degree. In the meantime, the world will continue to obtain first-hand information on the real human rights situation in East Timor from authentic sources, including independent observers and international humanitarian organizations, which have been working in East Timor with a genuine commitment to serving the interests and needs of the East Timorese people.

In this connection, Mr. Chairman, allow me to again cite several salient points from an interview conducted by Reuters and ANTARA new agencies with Mr. Van Raay following his visit to East Timor, and I quote :

> *"There is no abuse of human rights. Today there is no clear evidence that human rights are being violated. But if there are, the ICRC has sufficient possibilities to react properly. In addition, the ICRC is allowed to visit the prisons when it wishes to do so and it can report regularly to the proper Indonesian authorities and check for results".*

These same findings were also confirmed by Mr. Nuno Rocha, Fr. Julio T. Dutari and other recent visitors to East Timor.

It may also be instructional to members of the Committee to share the other equally significant findings of Mr. Van Raay, as stated in his official report to the Presidium of the EPP Group on East Timor, and I quote :

a. *the Indonesian authorities, central, provincial and local- exercise full power in the territory,*

b. *the Governor, Mr. Marrio Viegas Carrascalao, and many civil servants (about 80 %) are East Timorese,*

c. *the Central Government has invested substantial money, expertise and man-power to improve the situation of the population with regard to public health, education, housing, agriculture and other infra-structure,*

d. *there is no security problem any more. The last military operation was in 1984. Since then the army stopped hot pursuit and mopping up operations, and Fretilin's presence is limited to small groups moving in a mountainous area. In fact, the Indonesian Government had offered twice a general amnesty to Fretilin to join their brothers to develop East Timor, but they rejected to do so. There is now for example bus service 5 times a day between Dili in the north and Viqueque in the south without any risk of landmines, the preferred weapon of guerrilas,*

e. *the Roman Catholic religion has expanded vastly, profiting from the freedom of religion of the Panca Sila, the constitutional ideology. The churches are over-crowded, new ones and a cathedral are being constructed. Priests enjoy free movement and are conducting their religious missions, and can also serve mass in Portuguese,*

f. *church organizations, especially Roman Catholic ones, are doing good work in their pastoral and spiritual care of the people. There are priests of many nationalities, and many of them master local languages.*

g. *the population totals + 600.000, 12 languages are spoken which can be subdivided in 35 dialects, but more and more one can communicate in Bahasa Indonesia. Illitaracy will end within a generation.*

h. *Unity with Indonesia brought in 12 years uncontestedly more welfare, education, health and food than in the previous centuries, but a lot is still to be done to reach the level of the other parts of Indonesia.*

i. *the Portuguese heritage is still seen in historical and linguistic contexts.*

Equally, it is hoped that the preceding has also laid to rest the untenable claim of the denial of cultural and religious freedom in East Timor. The ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious heritage of the province is not only being protected and preserved, but also promoted by the Regional Office of Religious Affairs and the Regional Office of Education and Culture.

In fact, the growth and expansion of religious life in East Timor, especially of the Catholic Church, is such that there are now 540,000 followers of the Catholic faith out of a population of 674,500. Today, there are 109 Catholic schools, secondary schools, high schools, vocational schools and teachers' colleges with up to 22,349 pupils. In addition, for the first time in 450 years, a native of East Timor, Father Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo SDB, was appointed and consecrated Bishop of Titularis Lorium and Administrator of the Dili Diocese during a solemn ceremony presided over by the Holy See's Ambassador to Indonesia, Mgr. Francesco Canalini in

June last. Also, a Synod of Christian Churches (GKTT) has been established in East Timor, which incorporates the followers of all churches in East Timor. Its expressed purpose is to enhance cooperation among the churches in East Timor with a view to teaching and maintaining the spiritual dimension as well as ever-lasting values in the context of the people's aspiration for national development.

Hence, there is complete freedom of religion in East Timor. No restrictions are placed on the pastoral duties of the clergy who have total freedom of movement throughout the province as well as abroad. The Catholic church has full authority over the parochial school system and has been steadily expanding its educational activities. And on their part, the provincial and central Governments have allocated and are continuing to allocate significant resources - financial and otherwise - to facilitate the unfettered development of religious life in the province.

Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the healthy cultural and religious life in East Timor, all other fields of endeavour including education, public health, public housing, agriculture and communications are also demonstrating prodigious growth. Since only scant reference, and then in a derisive manner, has been made by the petitioners to the development efforts under way, I should like to at least briefly apprise the Committee of the state of the progress being made in the province.

In the field of education, the Government has built 562 elementary schools able to accomodate 90 % of Timor's school age children, as well as a university, something which could not have been hoped for during the colonial era. About 100 East Timorese students are now university graduates and about 1,000 are at present studying at various universities throughout Indonesia. Education is also directed towards vocational training, with agricultural training schools to be

opened in Anaro and Maubesi, as well as a polytechnical school to be opened in Dili this year.

As to agriculture, rice production in 1975 (before integration), was only 26,000 tons, now it has reached 40,000 tons. The production of maize, the staple of the East Timorese diet, which before integration was only 16,000 tons, has now reached 50,000 tons per year. With regard to plantations, an additional 2,000 hectares of cultivated land was recorded. Most of the plantations are utilized for coffee crops with a production of 10,000 tons in 1987/1988, while the highest production before integration reached only 5,000 tons. Besides the cultivation of superior varieties of rice and maize, and in line with the diversification scheme, various export commodities, such as cloves, vanilla, candle-nut and tamarind, are being cultivated.

In the field of health services, the number of hospitals has grown from only one to five, located in Dili, Maliana (Bobonaro), Baucau, with two additional hospitals in Dili and Baucau. As to Dili General Hospital, it is undergoing a major expansion in medical equipment, treatment and personnel. Furthermore, all regencies now have Community Health Centers (Puskesmas), which in the future will be upgraded to hospitals. In addition, all districts each have health clinics (sub-puskesmas) and several health stations. As to medical personnel, East Timor now has 114 general practitioners, 284 paramedics and 25 midwives. Health services will be further improved and in the coming five years all the 442 villages will each have paramedics.

Overland communication has also recorded tremendous progress. From only 20 km of asphalt roads before 1975 (found only in the city of Dili), there are now 700 km of asphalt-paved roads which connect the provincial capital with the regencies and districts.

Telecommunications have also been enhanced with the installation of a sophisticated automatic digital telephone exchange. Built at a cost of more than 3.8 billion rupiahs, it expands East Timor's telephone service capacity from 800 to 2,000 line units. Likewise, television reception is being upgraded with the installation of four more parabolic antennae in four of the most populous sub-districts, bringing the total number of television relay stations to twelve, which will allow all citizens of the province unimpeded access to television programing.

The steady expansion of the economy of East Timor, is also reflected in the growth of the per capita income, which increased by an average of 4.07 % annually and is significantly higher than the national average of 3.5 %. A key indicator that the benefits of development are reaching all strata of society, is in the fact that the agricultural sector which accounted for 50 % of the growth employs 86 % of the working age population.

To sustain the economic expansion, the Government is continuing to accord budget allocations, which are in the total amount of 25,325,577,473 for fiscal year 1988-89, with a view to strengthen the private sector, to broaden economic opportunities, to target areas and groups in need of special assistance, to encourage consumption of indigenous production and to promote commodity export.

Mr. Chairman,

Based on the foregoing factual account of the actual situation as it prevails in East Timor today and the fact that the province has now been an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia for the past 12 years, my Delegation sincerely hopes that the distinguished members of this Committee can recognize the correctness and irreversibility of the decision of the people of East Timor to become independent through integration with the Republic of Indonesia. Indeed, other international bodies inside and outside the United Nations no longer consider

this so-called question as worthy of any merit or concern. Is it not high time that our Committee too dispense with this pointless debate that has needlessly taken up so much of its valuable time ?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.